

doing students a great disservice when we only promote what is considered a traditional college experience.

My appreciation for CTE came at an early age. My father, after leaving the Navy, went through a CTE program, which led him to a job as a tool and die maker. Eventually, he decided to start his own business, which became quite successful.

As co-chair of the Career and Technical Education Caucus, and a senior member of the Committee on Education and Labor, I have also supported, and will continue to support, CTE programs that provide learners of all ages with career-ready skills.

From agriculture to the arts, from marketing to manufacturing, CTE programs work to develop America's most valuable resource, its people.

CTE has established itself as a path that many high-achieving students choose in pursuit of industry certification and hands-on skills that they can use right out of school, in skill-based education programs, or in college.

Congress recognized the importance of CTE when we passed the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act, which helps close the skills gap by modernizing the Federal investment in CTE programs and connecting educators with industry stakeholders. This bill was later signed into law by President Trump in 2018.

While this is a major milestone, there is still more work to be done. That is why I am supporting additional pieces of legislation on the horizon to keep updating and promoting workforce development throughout our Nation. These include:

The Skills Renewals Act, which creates a flexible skills training credit in the amount of \$4,000 per person that may be applied to cover the cost of a wide range of training programs that build skills expected to be in high demand by employers in the coming months.

There is also the Skills Investment Act, which enhances the Coverdell education savings accounts—tax-advantaged savings accounts for educational expenses—so American workers can use the accounts to pay for their skills-based learning, career training, and workforce development.

And lastly, the Cybersecurity Skills Integration Act, which creates a \$10 million pilot program within the Department of Education to award competitive grants to education-employer partnerships for the development and implementation, and/or expansion of postsecondary CTE programs that integrate cybersecurity education into curricula preparing students for careers in critical infrastructure sectors.

COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for CTE. Many of those who have been deemed as life-essential employees are those who have made their way to those jobs through the Career and Technical Education pathway. It gives

people from all walks of life an opportunity to succeed and restores rungs on the ladder of opportunity.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to encourage my colleagues to join my co-chair and I, Mr. LANGEVIN, on the bipartisan Career and Technical Education Caucus, to help us equip individuals of all ages with the skills necessary to fill jobs now and in the future.

BLACK HISTORY IS AMERICAN HISTORY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COSTA). The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Georgia (Ms. BOURDEAUX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BOURDEAUX. Mr. Speaker, this week, as February becomes March, Black History Month comes to an end. But I want to be clear, every month is Black History Month because Black history is American history.

Today, I am thinking of the amazing Black women and men who inspire us daily and who changed the world.

I am thinking of Ruby Bridges who, at only 6 years old, became the first Black student to integrate a southern elementary school.

I am thinking of Gwinnett's own Beauty Baldwin, the first Black woman to be a school superintendent in Georgia.

I am thinking of Hank Aaron, who showed the world the meaning of Black excellence when he broke Babe Ruth's home run record, and he was a proud Georgian.

I am thinking of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., an Atlanta preacher who shared his dream with the world and, in the process, changed it forever.

And I am thinking of Senator RAPHAEL WARNOCK, who preached from the same pulpit as Dr. King, and who now follows in his footsteps as an advocate for change.

□ 1030

I am thinking of KAMALA HARRIS, our Nation's first Black and first female Vice President, and of all the Black and Brown girls around the country who are finally able to look at the White House and see themselves reflected there.

Finally, I am thinking of our beloved Georgia friend, mentor, and colleague, John Lewis. Congressman Lewis would have turned 81 this weekend. Congressman Lewis spent his life getting into good trouble.

At 21, he was one of the original 13 Freedom Riders. At 23, as the chairman of SNCC, he spoke at the March on Washington. At 25, he led the march from Selma to Montgomery, in the process withstanding all the violence and hatred local and State officials could throw at him.

Congressman Lewis went on to serve Atlanta on both the city council and in Congress for more than 35 years, becoming the conscience of the Congress.

The tireless work of heroes like John Lewis pushes me to continue pursuing

equitable and just policies. Over the past 2 years, our country has had a much-needed awakening to the systemic inequality people of color face every single day. I promise to continue using my privilege as a Member of Congress to try to break down that inequality wherever it is found.

In that spirit, I am proud to be co-sponsoring some critical pieces of legislation being considered in Congress: H.R. 1, the For the People Act, a transformational bill that seeks to ensure free and fair elections and easy access to the ballot box, to secure nonpartisan redistricting, and to put people over dark money and special interests in elections; the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act, the first-ever bold, comprehensive approach to holding police accountable, changing the culture of law enforcement and building trust between law enforcement and our communities by addressing systemic racism and biases in order to help save lives; H.R. 40, which creates a commission to study reparations; H.R. 55, the Emmett Till Antilynching Act; H.R. 959 to address the Black maternal mortality crisis in America; a resolution to recognize the difficulty Black veterans face when returning home after serving our country; and a resolution to award the Congressional Gold Medal, Congress' highest honor, to the Freedom Riders.

Of course, while it hasn't been introduced, you can be certain my name will be one of the first ones signed up to co-sponsor the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, which will restore and modernize portions of the Voting Rights Act scrapped by the Supreme Court. The right to vote is sacred. John Lewis knew that better than most, and we must protect it.

Nor is it enough to sign on to these pieces of legislation and call it a day. Just as Black history should be celebrated every month, every piece of legislation we consider must also be looked at for how it will impact our Black communities.

Mr. Speaker, as I deliver remarks today in celebration of Black History Month, I would be wrong to not acknowledge that yesterday was the 1-year anniversary of the murder—yes, the murder—of Ahmaud Arbery. A young man from my State of Georgia, Ahmaud was killed while going out for a jog, a simple luxury that so many of us enjoy without fear of harm.

Ahmaud's case and the way it was handled continue to show us all that inherent biases and systemic racism remain prevalent in our society. We here on this floor must do everything we can to break those barriers down. You have my word, I will continue to do so.

CELEBRATING JACKIE SMITH'S RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Florida (Mr. RUTHERFORD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. RUTHERFORD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate an invaluable member of my staff on her well-deserved retirement. Jacquelyn Smith, “Jackie” to those of us who love her, retires this week, Mr. Speaker, after two decades of service to the Fourth Congressional District and more than a half century of work in government, education, and politics.

Her contributions to the State of Florida and to her colleagues are immeasurable, and our Nation is truly better off thanks to her efforts.

Jackie began her life of service as a teacher, moving often because of her husband’s assignment as a United States Air Force pilot.

She eventually found herself in politics, working on a Presidential campaign before eventually becoming district director to my predecessor, former Congressman Ander Crenshaw. When I took office in 2017, I was fortunate that Jackie stayed on as the director of special operations in my Jacksonville office.

Mr. Speaker, for over 20 years, Jackie has served northeast Florida. She has helped countless families with casework, served as my representative throughout the district, and made a significant impact on thousands of young people and students in our community.

Jackie has truly helped shape the next generation of Americans, especially those who will be going into military leadership. Each year, Jackie runs the military academy nomination program. She works tirelessly with students who apply, coaching them through the process and vouching for their selection.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell you no one knows nor works that system harder and better than Jackie Smith. And she does it simply for the benefit of her students. Thanks to her efforts, District Four historically has one of the highest selection rates in the country.

Jackie also runs our congressional arts program and the congressional medal program, both recognizing the many talented students in our community of northeast Florida.

Jackie often serves as my liaison to community groups, many of which she is already a part of, including the Rotary Club, the USO, and the local Chamber of Commerce. It often seems she knows everyone in northeast Florida, and unsurprisingly, they all consider her a friend. She loves them, and they love her.

Every day, Jackie comes to work with a servant’s heart, a sharp wit, and a contagious optimistic attitude. No job is too big; no job is too small. Most importantly, she embodies the virtues of integrity, hard work, and selflessness that Americans expect from their government.

Jackie leaves big shoes to fill in my office. However, as she is known to do, she leaves it better than when she found it.

On behalf of the Fourth Congressional District of Florida, congratula-

tions, Jackie. May your retirement be filled with warm, sandy beaches and continued memories with your husband, David, and your many friends and loved ones. We are so proud of your many achievements, and we thank you, Jackie, for your service to this Nation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you, I look forward to hearing all about her next career as a used shoe salesman for Ocean Sole Africa, as they improve the lives of citizens of Kenya and boost the economy here at home.

HONORING THE LIFE OF RAUL MONTES, SR.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GARCÍA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to honor a family man, a caring neighbor, and a selfless public servant, my dear friend Raul Montes, Sr.

Raul was the ward superintendent for the 22nd Ward in the city of Chicago, a community known as Little Village. Raul and I share a common background. We both came to this country at a young age, settled in the Chicago neighborhood of Little Village, and started organizing for the improvement of our neighborhood and for the greater political representation of Chicago’s Latino community.

Raul created a block club in our neighborhood that worked to improve and beautify homes, backyards, and streets. They installed lamps in their front lawns, planted sod in the parkways, and established block watches and activities for children and teens.

This deep involvement in community life is why I appointed Raul as a Democratic precinct captain of the sixth precinct when I was a member of Chicago City Council. He was the most effective and beloved precinct captain in Chicago’s 22nd Ward. His hard work helped me and many others win elected office.

As ward superintendent in the Department of Streets and Sanitation, he was frequently seen driving down streets and alleys, conversing with neighbors, and paying personal attention to their service requests. Even after he retired, he would ride around the neighborhood, asking people if they needed anything to be fixed in their homes or streets.

Raul organized the best block parties and loved to sing and dance with his wife, Maria. They enjoyed traveling, spending time with their grandchildren, and, of course, having big parties. He also enjoyed helping out at the corner grocery store or restaurant to stay busy and catch up on what was going on in the neighborhood after he retired.

Last month, Raul died of COVID-19, leaving a huge void in his family, his neighborhood, and the entire southwest side of Chicago. Today, we recognize his labor in the House of Representatives.

(English translation of the statement made in Spanish is as follows:)

A few words in Spanish. Today in the United States Congress we recognize the friendship, work, and efforts of a great public servant. Raúl Montes was a great superintendent of the 22nd District and Little Village community. We celebrate his life, all his efforts, and we’d like to express to Raúl’s family that his life was well lived, and for that reason, we give him this recognition.

Unas palabras en español. Hoy en el Congreso de los Estados Unidos reconocemos la amistad, las labores, los esfuerzos de un gran servidor público. Raúl Montes fue un gran superintendente de nuestra comunidad en La Villita y el Distrito 22. Celebramos su vida, todos sus esfuerzos y le comunicamos a su familia que la vida de Raul Montes fue bien vivida, y por eso le hacemos ese reconocimiento.

Mr. GARCÍA of Illinois. Raul Montes, rest in power, my friend.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from Illinois will provide the Clerk a translation of his remarks.

PRODUCERS WORKING HARD FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank the farmers and ranchers whose work does not stop.

Even in the face of extreme freezing temperatures this month, the likes of which we have not seen in decades, Kansas stood strong and got the job done.

The big First District of Kansas is one of the most productive agricultural areas in the country. The district is home to more than 60,000 farms and is made up of farmers, ranchers, feedlot managers, nutritionists, ethanol producers, ag lenders, and agribusiness owners who feed, fuel, and clothe the world.

I grew up in Quinter, and I spent thousands of hours on a tractor in fields and on horseback, doctoring cattle in our family’s feed yard. I know well agriculture’s working conditions are demanding on a good day, but especially so when our business partner, Mother Nature, is as unforgiving as she has been lately.

In the past month, Kansas spent 13 consecutive days with temperatures below freezing. This is a stretch of freezing temperatures we have not seen in our State for nearly 40 years.

But those who stand with snow up to their knees in the depths of winter or haul water in the drought of summer know agriculture does not take days off. No matter the temperature, our ag producers head to work long before most of us are awake and stay out until many of us have already laid our heads down at night.

They are people like Cody and Ashley Bornholdt of Inman, who bust ice by hand at all hours so their cattle have access to water and are still able to joke that after several days of negative